

## Community resources

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*courage is contagious*

## Viewing cable 09DHAHRAN46, SHI'A PROTESTS LEAD TO ARRESTS, INCLUDING TWO AMERICANS

If you are new to these pages, please read an introduction on the [structure of a cable](#) as well as how to [discuss them](#) with others. See also the [FAQs](#)

### Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cable's unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

### Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09DHAHRAN46**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09DHAHRAN46	2009-03-25 11:51	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL//NOFORN	Consulate Dhahran

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/06/22/116306/wikileaks-saudi-crackdown-on-shiites.html>

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VZCZCXRO9324
PP RUEHDE RUEHDIR
DE RUEHDH #0046/01 0841151
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 251151Z MAR 09
FM AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0052
INFO RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN 0069
RUEHBM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 0052

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAHRAN 000046

NOFORN
SIPDIS

PLEASE PASS TO NEA/ARP JOSHUA HARRIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/25/2019
TAGS: SA KU PGOV PHUM PINR KIRF KISL KDEM
SUBJECT: SHI'A PROTESTS LEAD TO ARRESTS, INCLUDING TWO AMERICANS
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REF: A. 09 RIYADH 346
      1B. 08 RIYADH 1197
      1C. 09 DHAHRAN 40
      1D. 09 DHAHRAN 8
      1E. 09 RIYADH 270

DHAHRAN 00000046 001.2 OF 002
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CLASSIFIED BY: Julie Stineheart, Acting Consul General, EXEC,  
DOS.  
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

1. (C/NF) Key Points:

-- On Thursday, March 19 Shi'a from the Awamiyya village in the Qatif oasis conducted a sit-in to protest the SAG's intention of arresting the radical Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, who has been in hiding since calling for possible secession from Saudi Arabia.

-- A couple of hours after the protest, Saudi security forces reportedly arrested more than a dozen Saudi Shi'a, mainly youth, including two dual American-Saudi citizen brothers.

-- Shi'a leaders assert that SAG actions taken since the Baqi'a cemetery incident (ref A) have only increased frustrations among the Shi'a and raised the prospect for sectarian violence.

-- Contacts point to the Ministry of Interior and Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as ultimately behind many of the abuses and discrimination of the Shi'a.

-- The prominent Sheikh Hassan al-Saffar said that the Shi'a in Kuwait enjoy a cooperative relationship with their government, while the SAG resorts to force and arrests as a means of interacting with its Shi'a citizens.

End key points.

2. (C) PROTESTS IN AWAMIYYA. During Friday prayers on March 13, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr (ref B) of the Awamiyya village in predominantly Shi'a Qatif reportedly gave a fiery sermon where he declared, "If we [Shi'a] don't get our dignity, then we will have to consider seceding from this country [Saudi Arabia]." In response, the Saudi Special Emergency Force (the riot police) came to arrest al-Nimr, but he had gone into hiding. On the evening of Thursday, March 19 a few hundred Shi'a conducted a sit-in protest at the main square of Awamiyya in support of the controversial sheikh. The sit-in lasted about two hours with protesters holding up pictures of al-Nimr and signs reading "dignity." (Note: Al-Nimr resides in Awamiyya, which is a notoriously radical Shi'a village in the Qatif oasis referred to half-jokingly by other Qatifis as "Little Falluja." As one Shi'a contact told PolOff, "every house in Awamiyya has a gun...")

seriously." End Note.)

¶3. (C/NF) AN AMERICAN IS ARRESTED. Around midnight, after the sit-in protest ended, the Special Emergency Forces (SEF) reportedly cut out the electricity to a part of Awamiyya and then arrested dozens of Shi'a youth, some reportedly as young as 12 years old. Noah Ali Saleh Abduljabbar, a 28-year-old American-Saudi dual citizen, was among those arrested on March 19. Post contacted his brother, Abdulmajid, on Saturday, March 21. He said that his other brother, Amar, also an American citizen, was subsequently arrested on March 20. He could not confirm reports that Noah was beaten by the police; however, he had not spoken with either of his brothers since their arrest nor did the Saudi authorities contact his family. Abdulmajid said he only knew that his brother Noah was arrested because one of his friends told him what had happened. Once Amar disappeared, they just assumed it was the SEF too.

¶4. (C/NF) INCREASED POLICE PRESENCE IN QATIF. On March 21, XXXXXXXXXXXX (protect), the manager of XXXXXXXXXXXX and a respected community acti hidden in the back of police stations. He downplayed the importance of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr and said that his following is limited to Awamiyya, and only a few hundred people are fervent followers. However, he voiced his concern that if one of al-Nimr's radical followers took up arms against the security forces, then the SAG might retaliate by indiscriminately killing innocent Shi'a.

¶5. (C/NF) FRUSTRATION. Since the sectarian clashes at the Baqi'a cemetery in Medina (ref A), a wide-range of Shi'a leaders and activists have repeatedly told PolOff of the mounting frustrations among the Shi'a (ref C, D). In a March 18 meeting with prominent municipal council member, XXXXXXXXXXXX (protect), he told PolOff that the SAG is only using "security measures" to resolve issues of discrimination. Aside from the arbitrary arrest of Shi'a, he cited inflammatory remarks that Interior Minister Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud published on March 14 in response to the Baqi'a incident. He said that the Shi'a must respect the doctrine of the "Sunnis and our righteous forefathers," blaming the Shi'a for the problems in Medina. (Comment: Several contacts, including XXXXXXXXXXXX, often cite MOI and Prince Naif in particular as the source of most sectarian discrimination. They believe that any orders given to arrest or harass Shi'a in the Eastern Province come straight from Prince Naif. End Comment.)

¶6. (C/NF) TENSIONS HIGH AMONG SHI'A AND SUNNI YOUTH. XXXXXXXXXXXX noted that tensions are especially high among both the Shi'a and Sunni youth discuss the rising tensions among the youth in their respective communities. The Sunni leader from Anak told XXXXXXXXXXXX that young Sunnis from the conservative province of Qassim were coming to Anak to "protect their Sunni brothers" from Shi'a aggression. XXXXXXXXXXXX said that the Anak Sunni leader told them not to come and to stay away. XXXXXXXXXXXX's concerns about the youth pote echo previous warnings (ref E).

¶7. (C/NF) "ENOUGH" IS ENOUGH. In early March, several Shi'a blogs carried a statement by a new Saudi Shi'a movement called "Enough" (Khalas). (Note: Some English language sources translated the movement name as "Salvation," but native Arabic speakers at post said that "Enough" or "Finished" is the intended meaning. End Note.) Post contacts believe that the well-written and forceful statement comes from a new Saudi Shi'a movement based out of London. The statement calls for the use of "all legitimate means to confront the unjust policies imposed by the [Saudi] government against the Shiites." The statement uses aggressive language such as "illegitimate," "failure," "extreme frustration," "oppression," "defamation," "force;" although, it stops short of calling for outright violence. XXXXXXXXXXXX noted that the statement was not only a criticism of the SAG, but also of the moderate Shi'a leadership (i.e. Sheikh Hassan al-Saffar, Isa al-Muzel, Sadeq al-Jubran, Dr. Tawfiq al-Saif and himself) who have failed to bring an end to sectarian discrimination through dialogue with the SAG.

¶8. (C/NF) SHI'A IN KUWAIT GOT IT GOOD. On March 20, Sheikh XXXXXXXXXXXX (protect), a highly respected Shi'a leader and frequent interlocutor of the SAG, held a public talk with about 500 members of the Shi'a community in Qatif. According to XXXXXXXXXXXX (protect), who was in attendance, XXXXXXXXXXXX described his recent trip to Kuwait where he met with the Shi'a community there. He said that the GOK supports the Shi'a and vice versa. He described how the GOK allows the Shi'a to have their school of law (Jaffari) represented in the Ministry of Justice. XXXXXXXXXXXX also noted that while the GOK looks to improve the stake of the Shi'a in their country, the SAG, on the other hand, arbitrarily arrests its Shi'a citizens without STINEHART